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SUBJECT: GUARANTEES SET STAGE FOR SECOND IRISH REFERENDUM
ON LISBON TREATY IN OCTOBER

REF: A. DUBLIN 220
[1](#)B. DUBLIN 30
[1](#)C. 08 DUBLIN 334

Summary -----

[1](#)1. (SBU) During the June 18-19 European Council meeting, the Irish government received guarantees on a number of specific issue, providing it with the justification to proceed with a re-run of the Lisbon Treaty referendum -- most likely on October 2, 2009. All major political parties are expected to back a "Yes" vote, while the most visible "No" campaigners in 2008 -- Declan Ganley's Libertas organization and Sinn Fein -- faltered in the local and European Parliament elections on June 5 and are not expected to be strong campaigners in October. Indications are positive that the Irish electorate will approve the Lisbon Treaty the second time around. Nonetheless, complacency of "Yes" supporters has been singled out as a leading cause of the defeat of the Treaty in June [1](#)2008. The "Yes" campaign -- and especially the major political parties -- will have to guard carefully to ensure this doesn't happen again. End Summary.

EU Council Provides Guarantees to Ireland -----

[1](#)2. (U) In advance of the June 18-19 EU summit, Taoiseach Brian Cowen sent a letter to all EU member states expressing the position that without a series of guarantees that had been promised Ireland by the European Council following the Irish rejection of the Lisbon Treaty in June 2008 (Ref B), he would find it difficult to authorize a second vote on the Lisbon Treaty. In response, the European Council approved guarantees to the Irish that would exempt them from provisions of the Treaty relating to taxation policy, the right to life, education and the family, Ireland's traditional policy of military neutrality, and other social issues, including workers rights. The guarantees will not change the text of the treaty nor will they require re-ratification of the Treaty by the other member states.

"Yes" Campaign Kicks Off -----

[1](#)3. (U) On June 21, Cowen announced that he would be leading the "Yes" campaign for the second Lisbon Treaty referendum. (Note: In June 2008 the treaty was rejected by a vote of 53.4% to 46.6%.) Cowen added that the date for Lisbon II would be finalized by June 26, with October 2 being the most likely selection. In addition to political figures, a group of well-known sport and entertainment personalities have launched an "Ireland for Europe" initiative to support the "Yes" campaign.

"No" Campaign Faltering -----

¶4. (U) During the 2008 referendum, th two most visible leaders of the "No" campaign were Declan Ganley of the Libertas organization and Sin Fein. Following defeat of both Ganley and inn Fein's Mary Lou McDonald in the MEP election, both organizations have been badly hobbled. The concerns of many other opponents of the Lisbon Traty, who were largely one-issue oters, have been addressed by the EU guarantees. While the "Yes" campaign appears to be fielding a star-studded cast of supporters, no one has stepped up to champion a Lisbon II defeat.

Comment

¶5. (SBU) It would seem that the referendum is the government's to lose. In addition to the sputtering "No" campaign, recent polls indicate that the Irish electorate is not inclined to abandon the EU during the current deeply troubled economic times. Having already unleashed a staggering defeat on the Fianna Fail/Green governing coalition in the June local and European elections (Ref A), the Irish voting public is not likely to feel that it needs to use the referendum to make another political statement and further punish its elected officials. Nonetheless, complacency of "Yes" supporters has been singled out as a leading cause of the defeat of the Treaty in June 2008. The "Yes" campaign -- and especially the major political parties -- will have to guard carefully against this happening again.

FAUCHER